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ABSTRACT

This teacher's packet provides background materials for teachers to incorporate the study of Jamestown, Virginia, into their classroom. The packet includes the following background essays: (1) "A Short History of Jamestown"; (2) "The Fort"; (3) "Life in an Indian Village"; (4) "Recommended Reading and Resources"; (5) "Supplemental Activities Elementary"; and (6) "Supplemental Activities Secondary." Maps and illustrations accompany the brief background essays. (EH)

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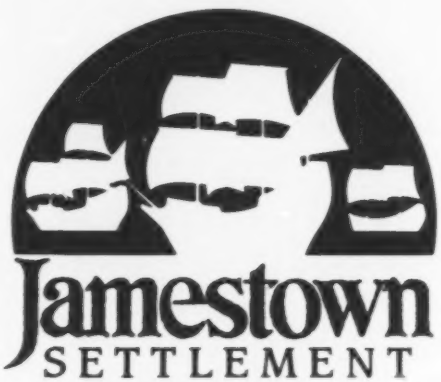
JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT MUSEUM

TEACHER RESOURCE PACKET



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A SHORT HISTORY OF JAMESTOWN

For many years before 1607 the English wished to form a colony in the New World. In the 1580's colonists were sent to Roanoke Island in what is now North Carolina, but within a short time the colonists vanished.

In 1606 King James I granted the rights to the Virginia Company of London to try another settlement. The Virginia Company was a group of wealthy Englishmen who wished to invest their money in a profit-making venture. Their motives were both financial and patriotic. They expected to open new lands for exploration, use the resources of the New World for industry and to develop new employment opportunities for English workers. They also hoped to find the same riches that the Spanish had been bringing home from other parts of the New World. The English were still looking for another way to bring spices to England from the Orient, and they planned to convert the Native Americans to Christianity. The investors planned the settlement, purchasing supplies, acquiring the ships, gathering the settlers and choosing the leaders.

Under the command of Christopher Newport, 105 men and boys set sail with a crew of 39 in three small ships, the Susan Constant, the Godspeed, and the Discovery, in December 1606. After six stormy weeks in the English Channel, they sailed southward toward the Canary Islands where they replenished their supplies. Then they headed across the Atlantic Ocean to the West Indies, where they again stretched their legs on the land and restocked their food and water. It was on the small island of Mona in the Indies that the only known death of the voyage took place when Edward Brooks, a settler, died of what may have been heat stroke.

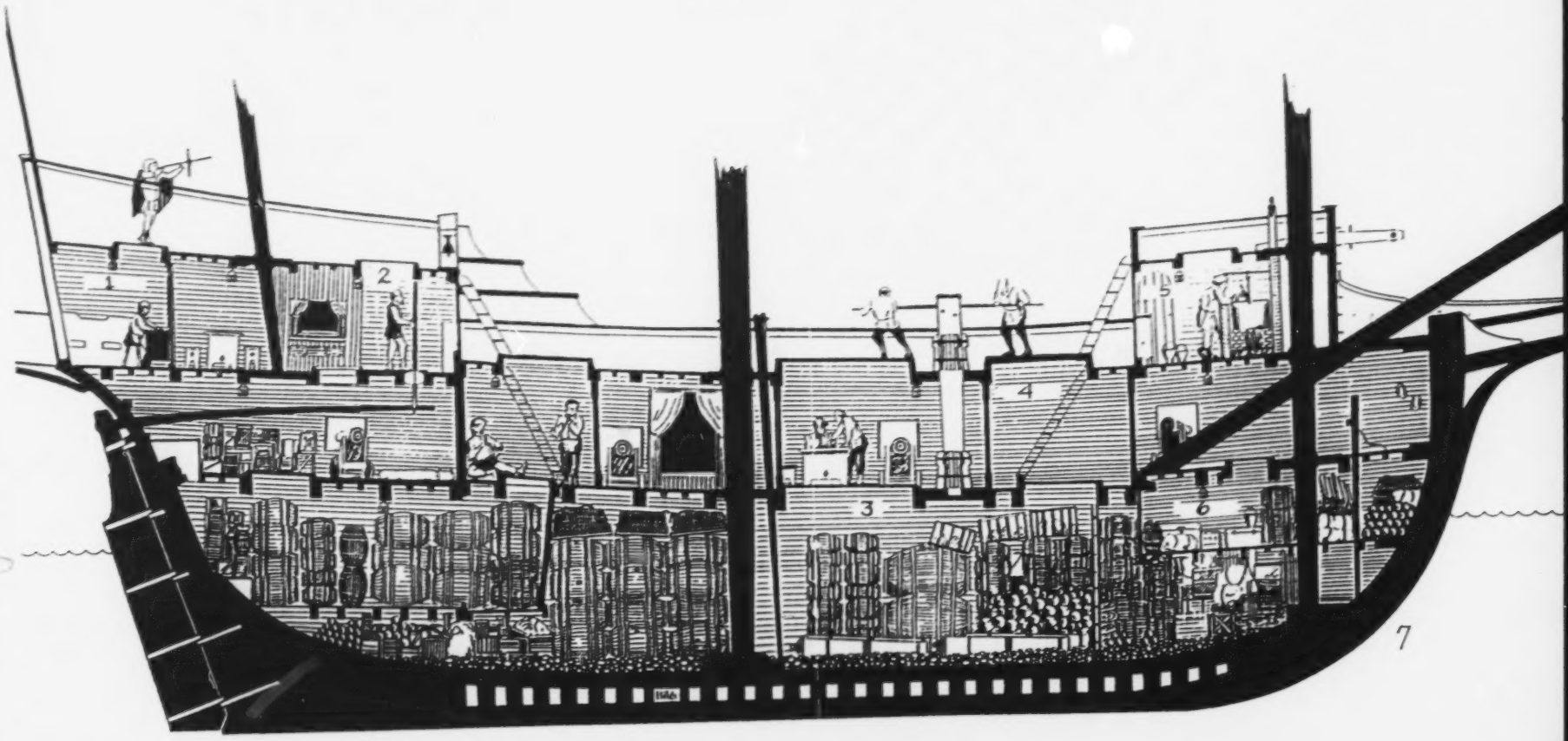
Then, heading northward in April the three little ships entered the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay on the 26th. There they assembled a shallop (small boat) of parts they had brought from England. With this they could explore the more shallow waters off shore. On April 29 they erected a cross and gave thanks on land they called Cape Henry, in honor of the King's eldest son. At this time Captain Newport opened the sealed box which contained the names of the appointed leaders and other instructions for the founding of the colony. The Council members named by the Virginia Company were Bartholomew Gosnold, Christopher Newport, John Martin, John Ratcliffe, John Smith, George Kendall and Edward Maria Wingfield. Wingfield was chosen by the others to preside as President.

After exploring the river, which they named after King James, going in the shallop as far as the mouth of the Appomattox River (the site of present-day Hopewell), they anchored their ships next to a peninsula not far from where the Jamestown Settlement Museum is now. There was deep water, and the site was far enough from the sea to protect them from passing Spanish ships. On May 14, 1607 the settlers went ashore and began to build a palisade (a protective fence). When it was completed in mid-June, Captain Newport set sail again for England, leaving the small ship Discovery with the settlers.

Those remaining 104 settlers represented different social classes. Many of them were

Susan Constant

1. GREAT CABIN
2. STEERAGE ROOM
3. HOLD
4. 'TWEEN DECK
5. FORECASTLE
6. STORE ROOM
7. HULL



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gentlemen, wealthy men who were not used to working with their hands. There were also craftsmen such a carpenters and blacksmiths. They were sent to help build the colony and to make the quality goods that the Company hoped to ship back to England. Some of the original settlers were indentured servants, men who agreed to work as servants for the Company for a number of years, usually four to seven, in exchange for passage to the New World. Unfortunately, this first group of men did not include enough laborers or farmers needed to help the settlement survive, nor were there any women in the group.

Despite their different backgrounds, all the early settlers faced the same difficulties in the new land. When Newport left the colony, things seemed to be under control, the weather was fine and progress was being made. But within the next two months conditions changed dramatically. The hot weather arrived, the local native inhabitants turned hostile, provisions ran low as food spoiled and the swampy location proved unhealthy. The water was unsanitary, and the tidal river brought brackish (salty) water from the ocean. These conditions caused illness so severe that men began to die almost daily. They were slow to learn how to grow food in their new environment. Lack of leadership was a major problem, and men on the governing council argued and disagreed so much that little was accomplished. It was not until the fall of 1608, when John Smith became President, that the colony made some progress. Meanwhile, by the fall of 1607, the epidemics had ended, but the number of settlers had been reduced to less than 50.

In January of 1608, Newport returned with food, equipment and news from England. That same month disaster again struck when the fort caught fire and many of the houses, provisions and palisades were lost. The buildings were reconstructed and corn was obtained from the Indians, with whom friendly relations had again been established with the help of John Smith and Pocahontas, the daughter of Chief Powhatan.

In October 1608, the second supply ship arrived at Jamestown. Since the London sponsors were still hoping for financial return on their investments they had sent workmen in this supply to produce glass, silk, pitch and tar and other wood products. And the first two women arrived in the colony.

Again, just as the settlement began to gain strength and stability, new troubles developed. Part of a third supply arrived in August 1609 bringing with it about 250 inexperienced settlers. The balance of this supply was shipwrecked in Bermuda. Among the stranded were the new leaders of the colony. At Jamestown, the new arrivals, along with damaged supplies and diseases, included some old rivals of John Smith whose authority they soon undermined. Then rats ruined most of the corn stores. John Smith, the only effective leader up to this point, was injured badly and had to return to England. This left the struggling colony to face the winter unprepared. That winter of 1609-1610 is often called "the Starving Time." Only about 90 people remained alive in the colony by spring -- about 60 of them at Jamestown.

In May 1610, Sir Thomas Gates, the delayed deputy governor, arrived in a newly-built boat with the rest of the Bermuda group. Because of the desperate conditions they found at Jamestown,

Pocahontas and John Smith have been linked together forever by history. However, it was John Rolfe who married Pocahontas in 1614. Their son, Thomas, was born in 1615. Many people living today proudly trace their family trees to this marriage.

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it was decided to abandon the colony. Just as the settlers started down the James, word reached them from Point Comfort at the mouth of the river that Lord de la Warr had arrived and was on his way up river to Jamestown with 150 settlers and supplies. Encouraged by this news, they hastened back to Jamestown and the settlement was re-established.

In May 1611, Sir Thomas Dale arrived as the new deputy governor. Dale enforced the martial law that had been established by his predecessor, Lord de la Warr, which added greatly to the stability of the colony. Dale saw to it that corn was planted and harvested, that laws were obeyed, and eventually (1614), that peace was made with the Indians. The year 1611 was also the year that John Rolfe successfully cultivated tobacco, which became the salvation of the colony as the efforts continued to develop industries that would make the colony economically stable. Immigration to the colony increased and settlement spread along the James River.

Internal changes in the organization of the Virginia Company in London led to greater freedom in the colony's government. Sir George Yeardley arrived in April 1619 to become governor, and issued a call for the first representative legislative assembly, which met at Jamestown on July 30, 1619. It was an attempt to give Englishmen in America those same rights and privileges which had been guaranteed in the mother country. Although it was not intended to establish self-government, the assembly's significance remains the same because for the first time in the New World the people elected their own representatives. This meeting was the beginning of the Virginia General Assembly.

Also in 1619, the Virginia Company recruited women in London to go to Virginia to become wives to the settlers. A few women had arrived prior to this time and were already established with their families, but the groups which arrived in 1620 and 1621 marked the first substantial number of women to come to the colony.

Another significant event which occurred in 1619 was the arrival of at least twenty "Negroes" who were brought to the colony from the West Indies in a Dutch ship. Because there were no English laws providing for slavery at this time, these first Africans were probably considered indentured servants like their English counterparts. They worked for a period of time and then were released to work for themselves. As time passed, others appear to have remained in servitude.

Jamestown was the capital of an expanding colony, the center of the political and social life, and measures were taken to meet the religious and educational needs of the settlers. According to the 1625 census, property owners came from all social classes -- yeomen, merchants, carpenters, hog-raisers, farmers, joiners, shopkeepers, as well as colonial officials.

Tragedy again struck the settlement in 1622, when an uprising by the Indians took the lives of over 300 people on outlying farms. Although Jamestown was attacked, it was not seriously affected because it had been warned by a friendly Indian, identified traditionally, as a youth named Chanco. The attack slowed the advance of settlement and ended the good relations with the Indians.

In 1624 King James I dissolved the Virginia Company and proclaimed the settlement a royal colony, which it remained until the American Revolution. This action did not alter operations to any great extent for the Assembly continued to meet, but the company governor was replaced by a royal governor. During the Commonwealth period in England, after Charles I was overthrown and beheaded in 1649, Virginia remained loyal to the crown. After the restoration of Charles II in 1661, Jamestown continued under royal rule.

In 1676, the normally loyal colony flared into rebellion under the leadership of Nathanial Bacon, who objected to the stern rule of Governor Sir William Berkeley and his handling of the frontier Indians. Because Bacon and his men were denied permission to march against the Indians, they opposed both governor and government. Bacon's troops attacked and burned Jamestown, but Berkeley escaped to the Eastern Shore. Bacon moved to Gloucester, where in September he became ill and died. The rebellions soon ended for lack of a leader. After this protest against the established government, the colony remained loyal to the crown for another century.

In the fall of 1698, a fire destroyed the State House at Jamestown, although its records and papers were saved. The seat of Virginia's government was moved the next year to Middle Plantation, which was renamed Williamsburg. After that, Jamestown slowly fell into decline. It is not an active community today, but exists primarily as an important historic site.

THE FORT

When the first English settlers arrived to settle on the shores of the James River in May 1607, they were faced with a completely new environment. The Virginia Company of London had tried to foresee the difficulties, but the settlers were the ones who had to deal with the reality.

They had chosen a low swampy peninsula that seemed acceptable in the month of May. The first step in following the Company instructions was to build a tall fence or "palisade" to serve as a barrier between themselves and any enemy such as the Spanish, who had settlements to the south. There were raised areas or "bulwarks" at each of the fort's three corners. On these were eventually placed cannons and guards.

As instructed, they next erected three "public buildings" which were intended for use by everyone -- a church, a storehouse and a guardhouse. The church was an important part of the lives of these men who belonged to the Anglican church. Attendance at services was required twice each day. According to John Smith, the first church was an old sail attached to several trees to provide shade. Later a more permanent church was built. The church served as a meeting place. The storehouse held all the colony's provisions under strict supervision since nearly all the precious supplies came from England. These would have included tools, weapons, armor and food. The items gathered locally for shipment back to England like timber, ore and sassafras would also have been stored there.

The guardhouse provided sleeping quarters for the soldiers and storage for a few weapons needed to protect the settlement from Spanish or Indian attack such as halberds, pikes, muskets and some of the armor.

Besides the public buildings, the colonists built individual houses which were shared by six to eight men. The contents and comfort of each house would have reflected the social class of those sharing it, gentlemen, craftsmen or laborers.

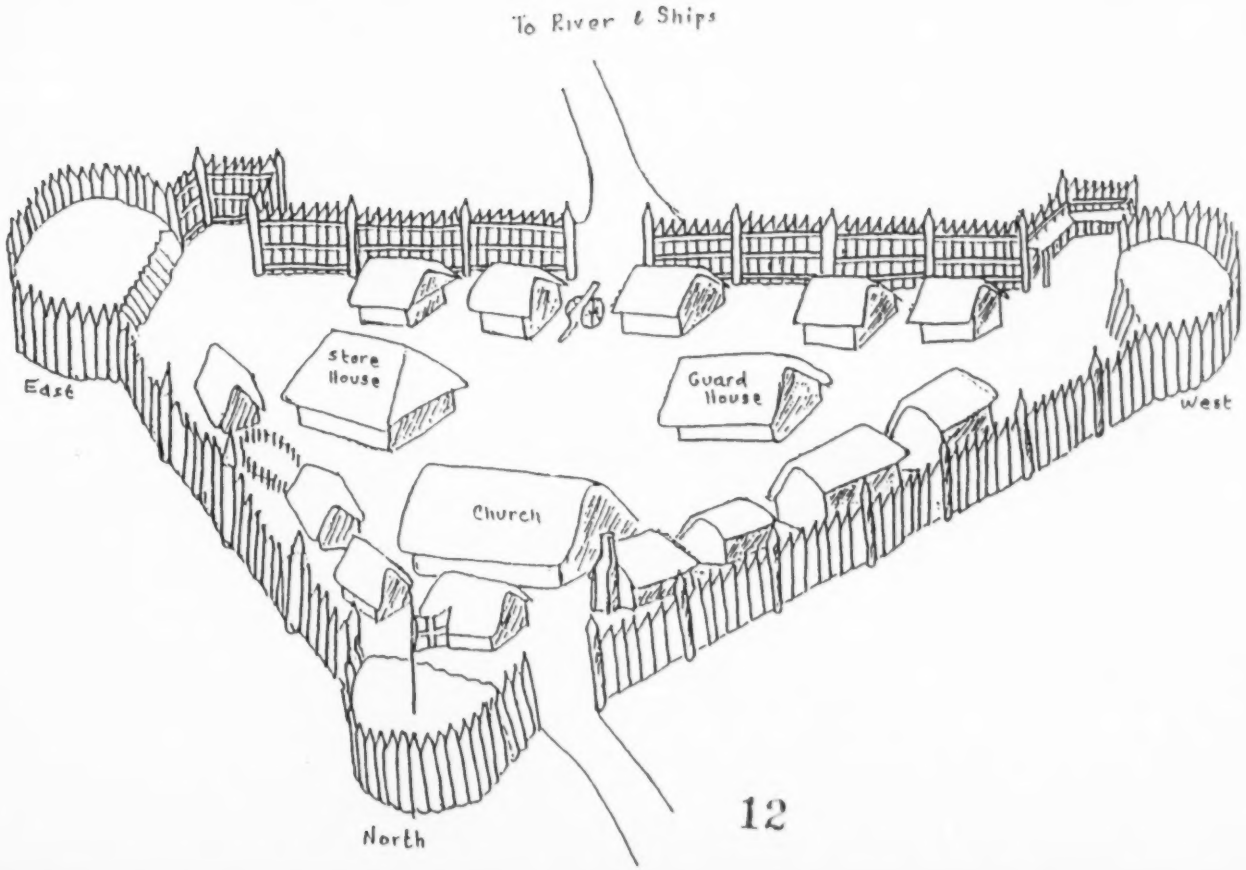
Most of the common work was farming. When riches were not easily found, and tobacco became the economic base, the settlement became a permanent agricultural colony. It took some time for this to come about since few, if any, of the first settlers were farmers. Pigs, chickens and goats and small kitchen gardens helped to supply the people with food. The gardens and animals usually became the responsibility of the women when they finally arrived. This was in addition to the traditional work of providing meals, clothing and childcare.

Although they spent many hours at work and in church, the settlers took some time for recreation. Music was an important part of life and may have included instruments such as recorders, violins and mouth harps. Bowling was mentioned by John Smith. The men probably played such English games as backgammon, draughts (checkers), nine-man-morris, or perhaps the illegal dice game of hazard.

Today the fort at Jamestown Settlement Museum has been re-created as it may have appeared during the years 1611-1614. Information for the construction was gathered by excavations of nearby settlements from the early 17th century such as Wolstenholme Towne, from writings of that era, and from graphics of period fortifications.

George Percy described the fort in this manner in 1607, ". . .triangle wise: having three Bulwarkes, [one] at each corner, like a halfe Moone, and foure or five pieces of Artillerie mounted in them."

William Strachey wrote in 1610: ". . . A low level of ground about half an acre . . . on the north side and so palisaded. The south side next the river. . .contains 140 yards, the west and east sides an hundred only. At every angle or corner, where the lines meet, a bulwark or watchtower is raised and in each bulwark a piece of ordinance or two well mounted, . . . And thus enclosed, as I said, round with a palisade of planks and strong posts, four foot deep in the ground, of young oaks, walnuts, etc., the fort is called, in honor of his Majesty's name, Jamestown."



The settlers at Jamestown used construction methods they had used in England. This was known as "wattle and daub." A sturdy timber frame was first erected. Between the timbers were woven branches and saplings to form a basic wall material called wattle. Upon this material they applied "daub," layers of a mixture of clay, sand, straw and water. Roofs were thatched with reeds or, perhaps, covered with planks. All the materials were readily available.

LIFE IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE

The English colonists were not the first people to set foot in Virginia. Paleo Indians lived in the area of the Chesapeake Bay probably as long as 10,000 years ago. The Native Americans living in Virginia in the 16th century and at the time of the English arrival were a late Woodland people referred to as the Powhatan chiefdom. This included about 32 Algonquian-speaking tribes who were ruled by the mighty Powhatan, Wahunsunacock.

The Powhatan Indians were primarily farmers planting fields that averaged one hundred acres in size. The women were responsible for working the fields and did so using various tools made from such materials as deer antlers. They grew corn, squash, pumpkins, beans and sunflowers. They also gathered wild foods from the land around them such as nuts, berries and roots. The women were responsible for making meals of these foods. Corn (maize) was the staple crop, and from it women produced such foods as corn cakes and hominy.

Powhatan Indian men had the primary tasks of fishing and hunting. Each winter men from different tribes would join together for hunting expeditions. Deer meat, or venison, served as a supplement to the mostly agricultural diet. The Indians used other parts of the deer such as skin for clothing and bones for tools. The men also protected their village. Warfare was an important part of life in Powhatan society and Powhatan men were constantly engaged in conflict with enemies such as the Monacans.

Adult life started at an early age for Powhatan Indian youth. Girls married at the age of about twelve and boys at fourteen. Indian girls watched their mothers to learn how to farm, how to cook and to perform the other tasks for which the women were responsible. Young boys learned from the men of the tribe. Their responsibilities probably included guarding the fields, often from the platform of a scarecrow hut. It was important to keep the animals away from the crops. This may have provided a good opportunity to practice with bows and arrows, an important skill for Powhatan men and boys.

Since the Powhatans were farmers, they did not move around like Indians of the western plains who had to follow the herds of buffalo. The Powhatans stayed in one location for a period of years or as long as their wood supply lasted. As a result, they built semi-permanent houses that were framed with saplings and covered with woven reeds or bark. Constructed by the women, these "yehakin" provided good protection from all the extremes of weather, sometimes for as many as sixteen to twenty members of an extended family. The fire in the center of the lodge was kept burning at all times which kept the house warm and dry.

The Powhatan villages ranged in size from thirty to two thousand people. Villages in the same area were made up of people from one tribe. Each tribe had a chief or "werowance" who ruled over the tribe. All the tribal chiefs were subject to Powhatan. They supported him in war and paid an allowance to him from their tribe. The Powhatans were a matrilineal society, that is, power passed through the family on the female side.

The Powhatan Indians had religious beliefs and customs quite different from the ones the English brought to Virginia. According to English accounts, they believed in a god called Oke, who inflicted evil as punishment upon those who displeased him. They also believed in a sun god called Ahone. Priests interpreted Oke's meaning and served as spiritual guides for their villages.

The Indians and English suffered through years of warfare with short periods of peace in between. Eventually, the Indians were forced off their lands. Their numbers were reduced by European diseases, starvation and warfare. By 1700 there may only have been about 1000 Powhatans left living in Virginia. Today the Commonwealth of Virginia recognizes seven Powhatan tribes; Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Nansemond, Pamunkey, United Rappahannock and Upper Mattaponi. Virginia also recognizes the Monacans, who were originally a people of the Piedmont.

Powhatan Indians of today have adapted to modern ways, but are proud of their own heritage and culture. Some of them still live on the Pamunkey and Mattaponi reservations in Virginia.

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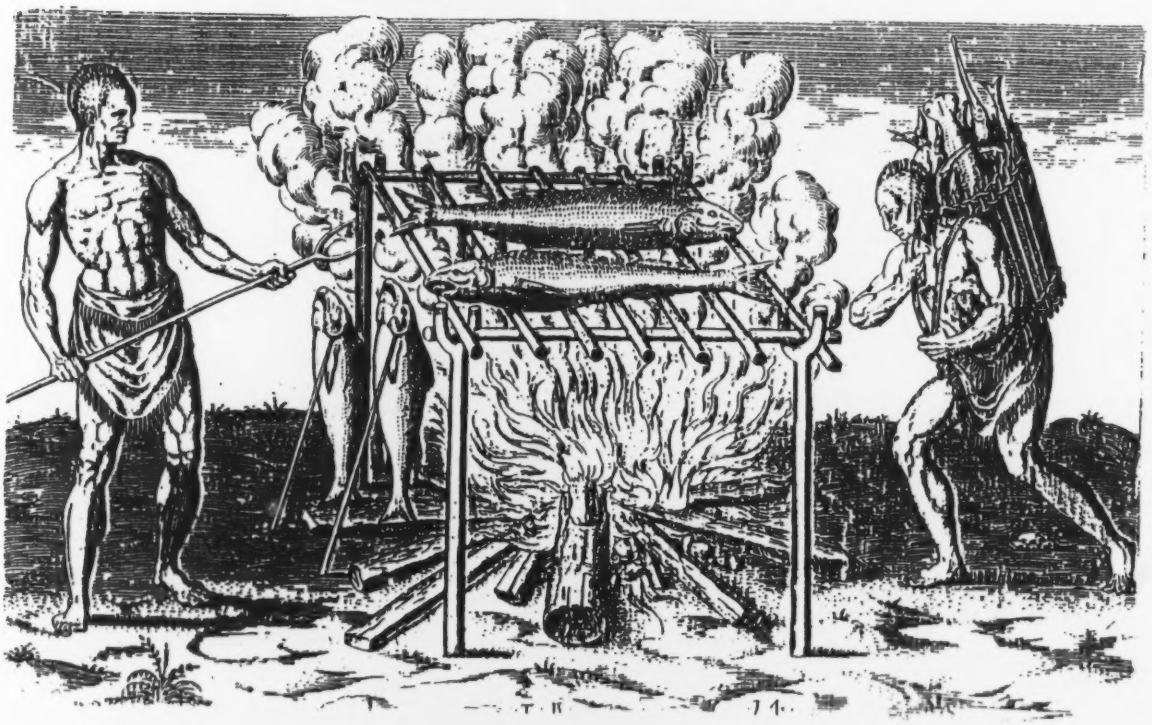
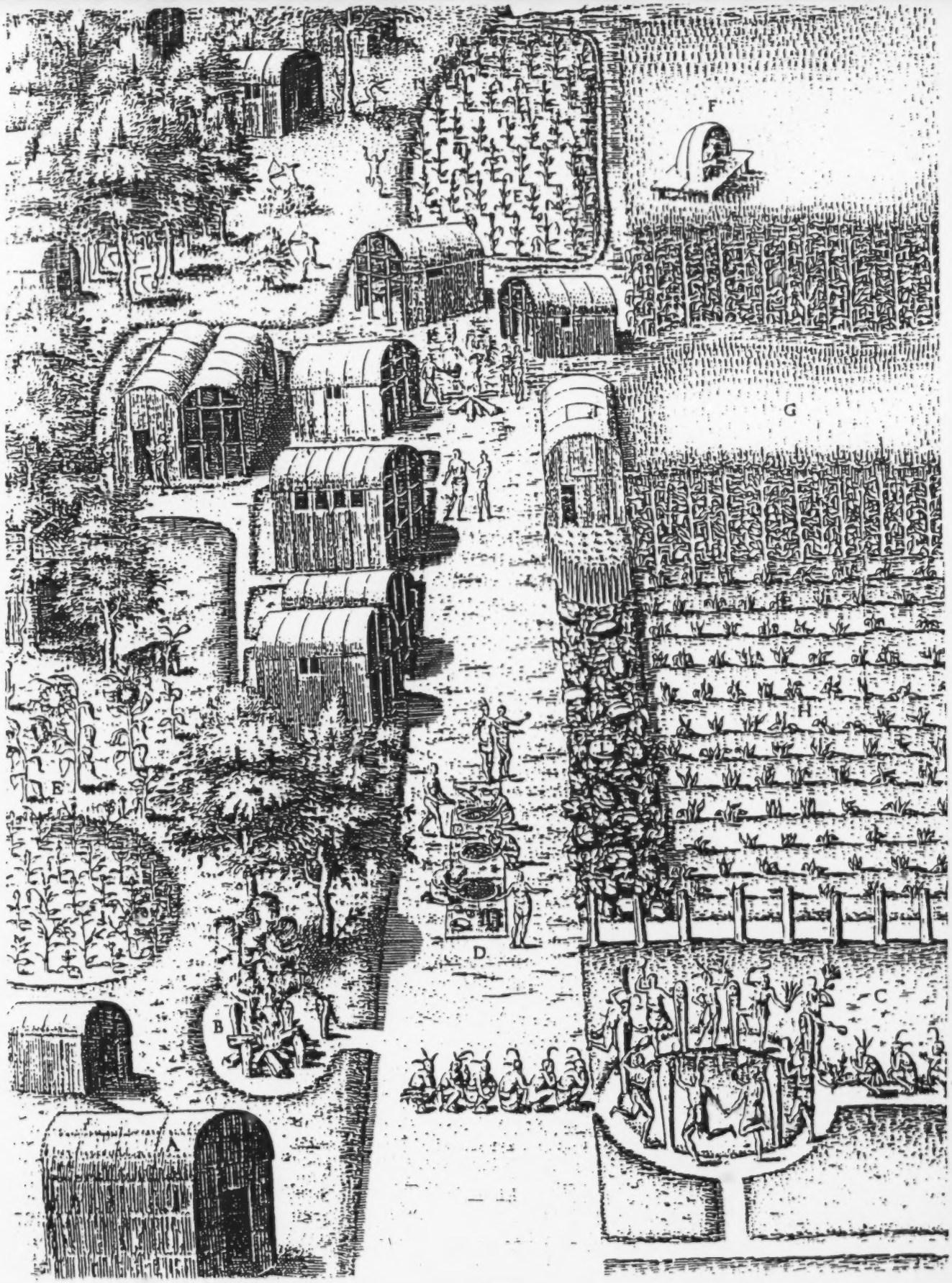
The following pictures are from engravings of paintings by John White. They depict an Algonquian culture, similar to the Powhatans' which was located on the coastal plain of what is now North Carolina.

John White was one of the Englishmen who attempted to establish a settlement on Roanoke Island in 1585. He became governor of the colony in 1587. His daughter, Eleanor, and her husband, Ananias Dare, were the parents of the first English child born in the new world, Virginia Dare. White returned to England that same year to obtain supplies for the colony. Because of the English troubles with Spain (which resulted in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588) White could not find ships for the relief of Roanoke, and his return was delayed. Three years later, when he finally sailed back to Roanoke he found that the colony had disappeared.

White's pictures, appearing in a report by Thomas Harriot, were used to encourage investment and settlement in the new lands of Virginia. At the Jamestown Settlement Museum White's watercolors, along with archaeology and contemporary descriptions are used to interpret life in the Powhatan village.

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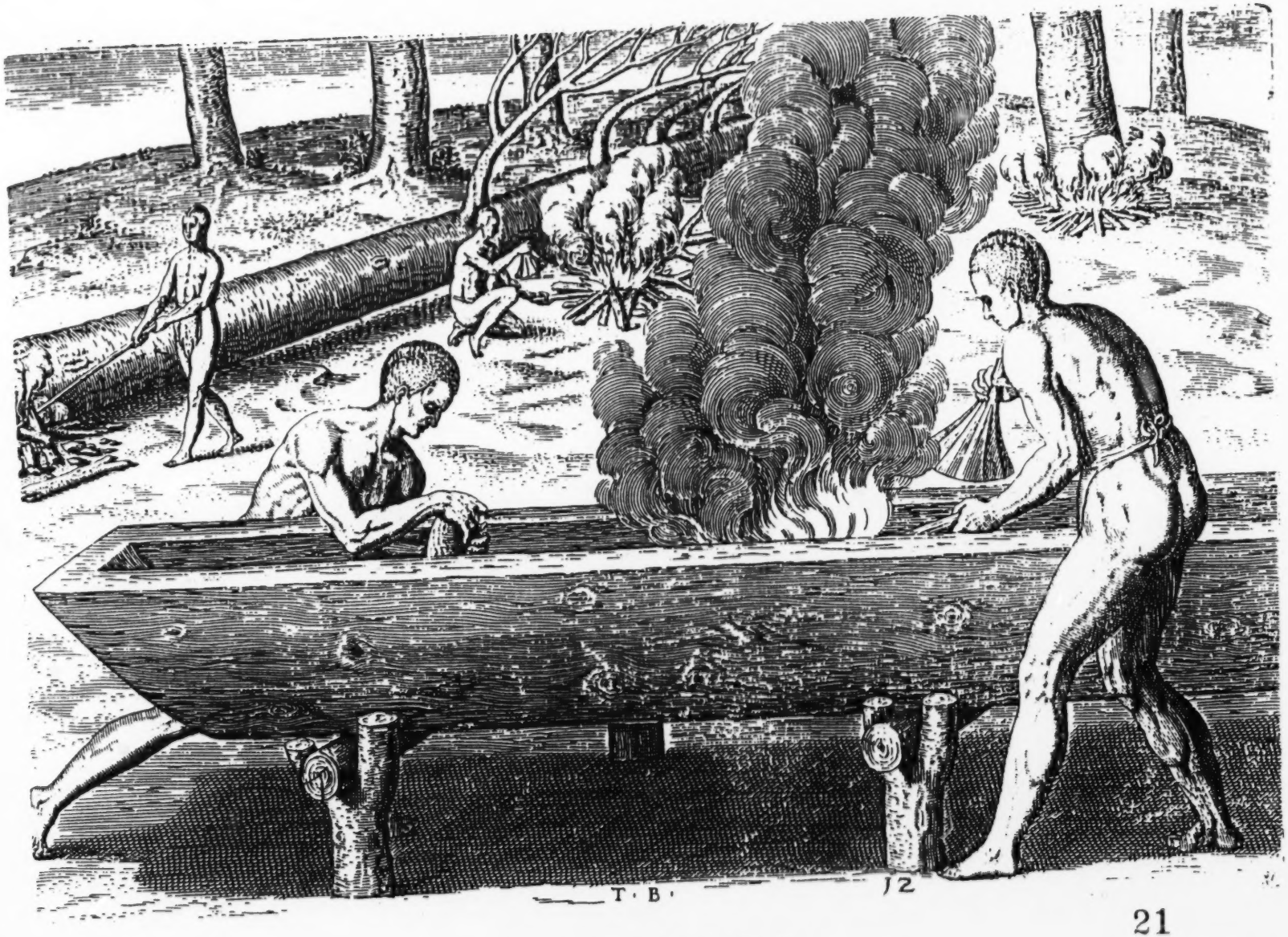

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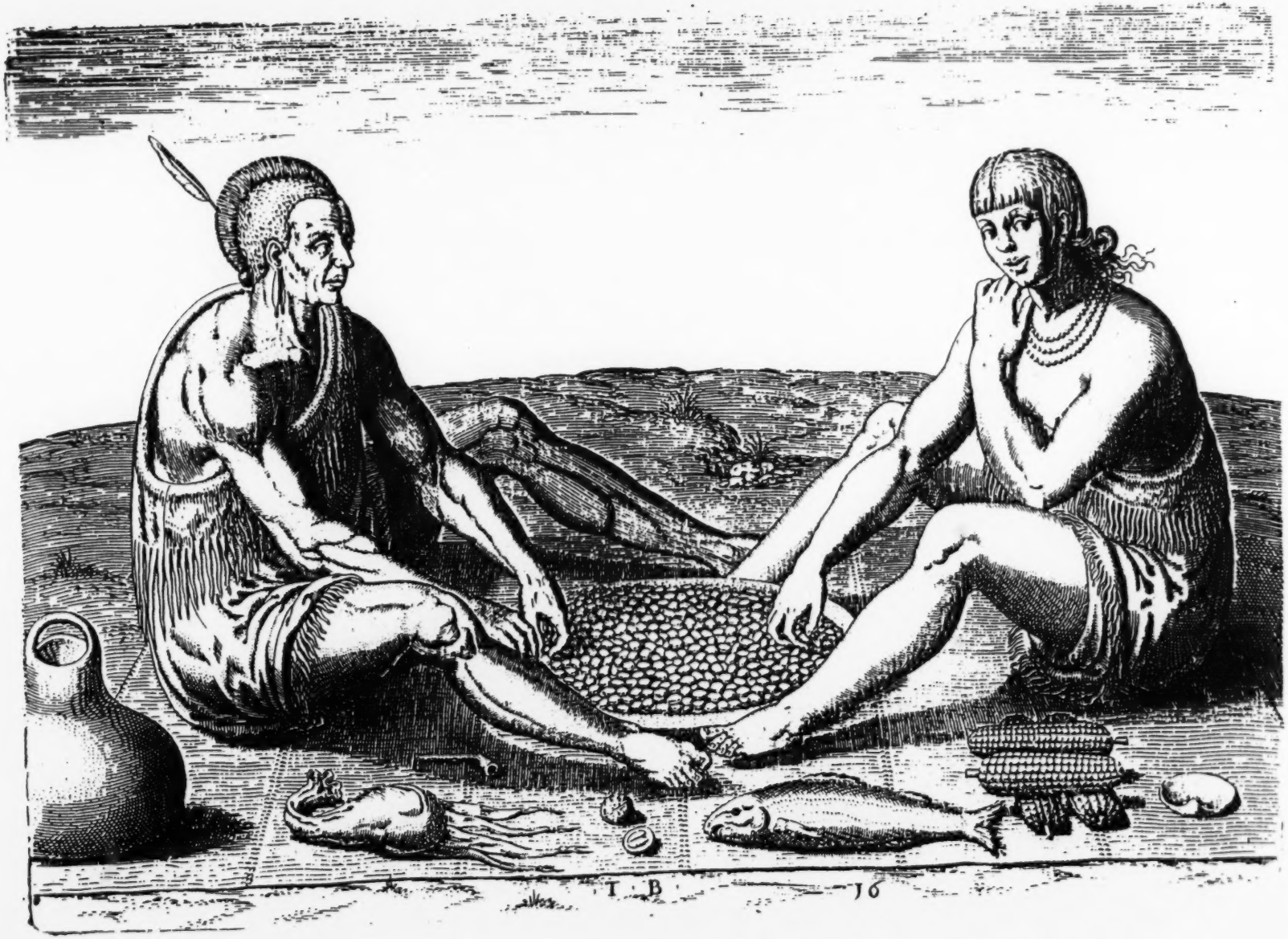

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RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES

American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the Founding of Virginia; Alden T. Vaughan

American Slavery, American Freedom; Edmund Morgan

A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia; Thomas Harriot

Captains From Devon; Helen Hill Miller

European Discovery of America; Samuel Eliot Morrison

The First Seventeen Years: Virginia 1607-1624; Charles Hatch

A General History of Virginia; Captain John Smith

John Smith's Map of Virginia; Ben McCary

Lawes, Divine, Morall and Martiall, Etc.; David Flaherty (ed.)

Medicine in Virginia 1607-1699; Thomas P. Hughes

"Myne Owne Ground": Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676; T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes

Observations; George Percy

Pocahontas; Philip Barbour

The Powhatan Indians of Virginia, Their Traditional Culture; Helen Rountree

A True Relation; John Rolfe

Three Worlds of Captain John Smith; Philip Barbour

A Voyage to Virginia in 1607; Louis Wright (ed.)

Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies; Julia Cherry Spruill

FOR STUDENTS

The Double Life of Pocahontas; Jean Fritz

Jamestown: the Beginning; Elizabeth A. Campbell

Jamestown: the First English Colony; Marshall W. Fishwick & the Editors of American Heritage Junior Library

A Lion to Guard Us; Clyde Robert Bulla

The Serpent Never Sleeps; Scott O'Dell

SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES
ELEMENTARY

1. The ships on which the colonists traveled to Jamestown were very small and made of wood. Passengers were allowed very little time on deck. The traveling was slow and often boring because speed depended upon the wind. The original trip to Jamestown took 144 days. Have your students discuss what it would have been like to have been on the journey. What types of activities might have been performed aboard the ships? What types of things might the passengers do to pass the time? What problems may have arisen in life below deck?

2. Have your students write an entry to the Captain's log of the Susan Constant. Have them include reports on the duties performed by the crew as well as all the events of the day. Have them remark on the need and attitude of the passengers.

3. Have the students pretend they are residents of the Jamestown colony. A supply boat is returning to England and will be carrying letters home to the families of the colonists. Have each student write a letter to a family.

4. Have your students imagine that the U.S. Space Program has found a planet that is so much like earth that humans would be able to live there with little difficulty. Your students have been chosen as crew members to settle and explore this planet. They are responsible for choosing the provisions they would take along. Ask students to make a list of ten items they would take. Put a list of the most common items on the board. Discuss with students how the supplies for a space journey in the 1990's might differ from the supplies needed for the journey to Jamestown in 1607.

5. Before the colonists arrived the Indians had established permanent settlements throughout eastern Virginia. They had developed their own culture -- one very different from that of the English. With your class, devise a chart that illustrates the differences in the two cultures. Use such indicators as clothing, daily life, religious beliefs, etc. Have your students give possible reasons for the differences.

SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES
SECONDARY

1. Have your students look at a map showing the course of the ships as they sailed from England to Jamestown. Discuss with your students the reasons this particular course was taken, i.e., following trade winds and currents, stopping at islands to obtain fresh water and food. In addition, discuss what the voyage was like for those 17th- century colonists and crew. Remember that the voyage took 144 days.

2. Have students plan an expedition to the New World in 1607. After reading background material have them make two lists. First list the types of settlers they would recruit for the journey. (What skills should they have?) Second, list the items the settlers should bring. (Remember that they are traveling.) Then ask the students to plan a similar expedition in this decade. Again prepare two lists. Compare the lists from the two different eras. Are they different? How are they similar?

3. Ask your students to describe what kinds of sources might have been used to tell the stories of either the Powhatan Indians, the first Africans to arrive in Virginia, or the English settlers. Consider how precise or accurate these sources might be - are there cultural biases or time/memory lapses? (Examples: contemporary journals and reports, ships' logs, letters, archaeological evidence, tradition such as oral histories and stories.)

4. Write a journal, as if you were a settler or sailor for a brief period in 1607, 1608, 1609 or 1610. Remember that the first two women arrived in 1608, Mistress Forrest and Anne Burras, her maid, about age 14. For a time Anne was the only unmarried woman in the colony. If she had been able to write, what might her journal have contained after her first week or two at Jamestown?

5. Ask your students to describe or dramatize a longhouse fire conversation in a Powhatan village. The natives are discussing the English and their strange ways, describing them to villagers who have not yet been in contact with them. Other options to be used: newly- arrived Africans discussing their experiences and new surroundings; Englishmen describing a visit to a Powhatan village.

America
New York
Boston
Nova Scotia
Washington
Jamestown
Cape Henry
Bermuda
Miami
1280 Miles
Puerto RICO
Mona
375 Miles
St. Thomas
Nevis
Antigua
Guadeloupe
Dominica
Martinique
Barbados
Tenerife
Canaries
2240 Miles
Medeira
1750 Miles
England
Suffolk
London
360 Miles
Bay of Biscay
France
Spain
Portugal
Gibralter
Mediterranean Sea
Africa
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